1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[p.12]

II

Mountains, Plains, and the Sea

13 In a literal sense, the rainbow in the rock is the magical coloring of the Greek landscape, the crystal-clear air, and the intensely blue sea. Anyone who paints the Greek sea as it actually looks runs the risk of skepticism from critics abroad who might well say, "no sea could be so blue, in so many shades," particularly if all they have for comparison is the gray Atlantic. An artist friend told of a young Swedish painter who came to Greece after considerable success in landscape painting in Italy and France.[1] For six weeks he tried to paint, but nothing looked right. It was only after he developed new techniques that he began to catch the spectrum of opalescent colors, the strong variations in light and shadow, and the sharp delicacy of forms visible at a considerable distance. Anywhere in Greece the physical environment is impressive, not as a backdrop to be taken for granted, but as a sensation to be enjoyed in its own right.[2]

●182 [829 13] Perhaps this is why so many Greeks are ready to accept geographic determinism as an explanation of their difficulties. There, spread out for all to see, are the effects of climate, of differences in terrain, of dwindling or unprotected resources. And the temptation is strong to assume that all troubles would pass away if only the earth were more fertile or if heaven shed its rain more plentifully. But the explanation is not quite so simple. Those turning to the philosophy of history for an answer might be told by

1:Sanders Z-5,† (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

someone like Arnold Toynbee that Greece's early greatness grew out of the stern necessity to respond to the challenge of a partly hostile environment and a population growing beyond its means of subsistence. 182

Although the study of Greece's past shows that the cultural, or man-made, aspects of life have been tremendously important, one must nevertheless give the physical environment its just due. This leads to a consideration of some of the cold, hard facts about the rock that is Greece.

The Regions of Greece

Each of the regions of Greece, shown on the accompanying map, has its own assortment of mountains, plains, and a stretch of coastline; each has its own history and traditions; each has its own problems posed by the 101 13

101
102
131

1:Sanders Z-5,N (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[P. 176]

IX

Ceremonies and Holy Days

593 ●182 [589] [369] Greek family life also has its serious overtones. In such a closely knit unit the illness or death of a member may be more keenly felt than in a family system where one's own security is not so closely tied in with the fate of the others. In a society such as rural Greece, where there is so little room for the unmarried woman, the task of finding a suitable husband for a daughter or sister can become an overriding consideration coloring all of life's relationships. Where the family is the economic and producing unit, economic ups and downs are intimately geared with the ups and downs of the family. Should the bond between husband and wife become strained, the home increasingly becomes the center of tension with fewer outlets than exist in an urban setting. In such cases, the man stays around the house as little as possible and the wife seeks the company of the neighboring women or of some relatives.

Fortunately for all, just when home life has become a bit ruffled, some ceremony or holiday appears to make the family forget for a while their differences in order to carry off the ceremony with the proper flair. The housewife can immerse herself with good conscience in the time-consuming preparations; the father knows that certain duties are exclusively in his domain; and the children wait expectantly for their cues from the adults so that they, too, may participate.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[P 205]

XI

The Village Coffeehouse

Eventually the coffeehouse, instead of being merely the setting for many lively conversations about village life, became an object of interest in its own right. It, too, is a village institution which takes its rank along with the school and the church. The coffeehouse, or *kapheneion*, is more than just a structure. Like the English pub, it is a place of assembly, a communication center, a place to transact business, satisfy one's thirst, or find out about the health of one's friend.

Most coffeehouses are located near the main square or at some crossroads where things are apt to happen. They find their fullest development in the cities. In the early evening, the time of day when Washington "rolls up its sidewalks" and becomes quieter and quieter, the squares of Athens, the Greek capital, literally burst into life. Constitution Square, for instance, after hundreds of chairs, which have been stacked during the day, are set up around small tables, the waiters begin their hazardous dashes back and forth across the busy street to the food shops which line the square. Their frenetic activity contrasts with the leisurely attack by the patrons upon the small cup of sweet, sirupy coffee and glass of water before them, although a conversation at some table may reach such proportions that one becomes oblivious to the automobile horns, the radio blaring out some popular tune, or the clink of spoons on a glass as people try to attract the attention of a waiter.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

575 [474] For men, the cooperatives are the chief associations, although meetings are relatively infrequent since these are primarily service organizations. They have not yet really taken on the educational role displayed by the youth or women's groups.

At best, these organizations which have been described exist to satisfy the interests of the members who affiliate. Unlike the institutionalized church board, school board, and community council, they do not exist to serve community-wide needs even though many of their stated purposes might contain grandiose aims. Most of these are not organizations which the villagers themselves have created, but have been formed in response to outside pressures and have been founded in the hope that they will do something to help the villagers have a better life. What makes the promotion 575 of such organizations difficult is the utter lack on the part of the peasant .571 of an abstract loyalty to an organization; he goes if he wants to or if he likes the agent from outside — not because he feels it his duty as a member to support the group of which he is a part.

Even if the numbers of organizations in rural Greece were doubled and the membership quadrupled, it is hardly likely that the Greek peasant would think of the "organizational approach" to problem solving. Where some Americans might get together and form a group to deal with a problem, the Greek peasants would either say "let the central government do it" or, if they are more sophisticated, relegate it to the community council to worry about. There is no tie-in between individual responsibility and membership-in-action groups, such as one finds in suburban America; the peasant is in the preorganization stage, which perhaps indicates why his life seems so untrammeled to those who get to know him well.

The Sense of Community

621 ●182 Greek village life has a unity in the sense that the peasants see their life as a whole and do not compartmentalize it in the way that it has been presented here. They make no distinction between religion and agriculture, family life and recreation, mutual aid and local government. Life flows on day by day, each day with its own tasks and joys, but marked by the variations which the seasons bring. Nor does the Greek villager distinguish in his mind among his village as a place or physical setting, his home, or the people who walk the streets. All these, to which we might also add the donkeys, goats, and other animals, possess a unity in that they fit together as a part of his accustomed world.

621 578 665 669 182 But Greek village life does not have a unity in the sense that there is perfect agreement within the community on every course of action or in the sense that people placidly sit by and concur in what a few self-appointed leaders might choose to do. Factions arise, and many of them persist. These can arise in time of war when rival armies visit the village in the search

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

for enemy sympathizers, thus presenting a wonderful chance for the unscrupulous person to denounce a fellow villager with whom he wants to even an old score. In the choice of sides in the Communist-inspired guerrilla war, for example, definite factions came into existence and their lines have not been altogether obliterated today.

Despite factionalism and the lack of idyllic harmony, it is correct to say that most villagers feel a sense of community. It may seem entirely absent whenever people are trying to persuade the villagers to carry out community improvements from which they can see no immediate benefit, but it is there to be reckoned with whenever the reputation or the safety of the community is threatened. To try to explain the basis for this sense of community is to review much of what has already been said, but perhaps it can be understood in terms of four divergent strands: *philotimo,* or ultrasensitive self-esteem; a common living space; shared institutions; and an accepted system of social control.

Philotimo. Social phenomena in Greece must be seen first in terms of individuals, who in turn cannot be understood without recognizing the national trait of philotimo. Dorothy Lee has clearly explained this complex character trait:

> Everyone has his *philotimo,* as an individual, as a member of a family, and, most of all, as a Greek. On this rests Greek individualism, since it is sheer being which is respected, not position in the world or achievement. On this rests Greek democracy and equality, since everyone, both as a person and as a Greek, is equal to everyone else, neither superior nor inferior. . . . This does not mean that there is lacking a balance of roles or interpersonal structuring; but these relationships of interdependence, of leader and followers, of division of areas of responsibility and work are not cast in the mold of superiority and inferiority. Inferiority comes only with the forfeiting of the *philotimo.* . . . The inner core of the Greek must never be exposed; and *entrope,* the Greek word for shame, modesty, decency, propriety, self-consciousness, embarrassment, means: "turning inward." This is a concept both positive and negative: you have done something shameful only because you have failed in the positive aspect, in modesty and decency. Out of *entrope* a Greek avoids saying things and doing things which would reflect on the *philotimo* of himself, his family, his country. For example, the self-made man in Greece does not boast of his rags-to-riches progress. This would expose the poverty of his village, the inability of his family to help him, the fact that his uncle or his godfather could not or did not do his duty by him; it would expose much that should remain decently covered, and would further prove him to be lacking in *philotimo.*[3]

Dr. Lee then goes on to explain that the essence of philotimo is inviolability and freedom and that the sense of inviolability makes a Greek extremely "touchy." An offended philotimo leads to retaliation, not self-reproach. She writes:

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

To suggest to a Greek that he needs aid in raising his standard of living because his ways are backward is to violate his *philotimo* as a person and as a Greek. There is need for aid now because of acts of God, not because of personal failure or Greek inadequacy. . . .

One may well ask how this trait of self-esteem is related to a sense of community. The connection is twofold: first, the adult member of the community participates as a free agent and as an expression of his own individuality; he can cooperate because he feels free, and by the same token he can refuse to cooperate. But the second connection makes him think seriously before refusing to cooperate, for he would be shaming himself and others if he let his village down. Yet the sense of community need not be limited to formal cooperation; it can be a state of mind as well, a feeling of loyalty one carries about, and a deep psychological identification with the village where one was born and in which one grew up.

A common living space. One writer attributes the unity of the Greek village to the residents' dependence upon their physical environment:

> First, the people are directly dependent on the land, hence their interests are all one. Second, the village owns grazing lands and meadows used in common by the farmers. Third, the people are highly interdependent in respect to water supply. Thus a sense of cooperation pervades the village. Fourth, the people of the village are limited in their actions by the very village's physical structure; the width of the streets, the pavement or lack of pavements, and degree of crookedness of same. Lastly, the whole physical lay-out is such that ceremonials and rituals as repeated year-in and year-out by slow processions, must change even if the ceremonials were to become mechanized.[9]

An earlier chapter on the village setting has discussed this factor, which must be taken into account in considering the identification people feel with their village. People develop a "sense of belonging" with those who walk the same village lanes, send their animals to the same community pastures, draw water from the same wells or fountains, and share the same living space. This propinquity does not necessarily produce a liking for everyone frequently encountered, but it calls for the recognition that these neighbors or fellow villagers must be dealt with in solving many of the ordinary affairs of life.

Shared institutions. Partly related to the physical pattern of the village are the church, the school, and the office of the local government, whose very structures are visible and concrete signs of the institutional complex which they embody. But these institutions are more than a material expression; they are also the focal points of the values which the people inherit and pass on to their children. On the basis of these, people ascribe rank to each other; on the basis of these, people make decisions relative to what activities are most worthy and which are least worthy. Community

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

life, as well as individual life, has its evaluative mechanisms which are brought into play in problem solving. The local institutions, described so fully in previous chapters, either have certain kinds of problems which they are supposed to treat, or the institutional leaders are sometimes called in to help deal with situations too grave for any single institution to handle. Again, the sense of community which a Greek villager develops is based in part not only upon sharing with others the activities which these institutions perpetuate, but also in knowing that he and his family are dependent upon them for meeting many of life's basic needs and aspirations.

The introduction of formal organizations into the Greek village, although they may accomplish certain specific goals, can also have the net effect of introducing new cleavages. The local institutions as described have been inclusive in that almost everyone in the village who wanted to could participate in them, with some allowances made for sex and age differences. But organizations bring in the idea of members and nonmembers. Some belong; others do not. Where membership is interpreted as signifying that the member is superior to or better than the nonmember, it causes resentment within that village where organizations are relatively new and not much appreciated. This may even run counter to the local value system. Yet experience in other societies, and even in the urban sectors of Greek society, has shown that economic development — which many peasants ardently desire — is based on specialization. This, in turn, is promoted by organizations which encourage and sustain this specialization. Society, even in the village, becomes more heterogeneous as the level of living rises, as the number of alternative choices (occupational, recreational, and such) increase, and as greater reliance is placed upon the individual.

Therefore, in understanding the traditional sense of community one must see the countervailing tendency to organize along specialized lines and to promote individual rather than community interests. In an industrialized society this means that a new kind of solidarity, based on functional interdependence, replaces that solidarity based on homogeneity and a common view of world and work.[1] Very often in the shift from the traditional to the more complex type, individuals and communities experience disorganization which, in time, leads to a reorganization better adapted to new needs. Closely related to the degree and type of disorganization is the system of social control and how it operates.

Social control. In Greece, as elsewhere, the most effective social controls are built into the personality structure of a person as he grows up. He learns what his society considers to be morally right and wrong and, if "well brought up," does not question these standards and, more often than not, abides by them; he also learns what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior at given times and places; he knows, too, that in a particular situation some people (say, the oldest men present) behave differently from

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

The Area Surrounding Vasilika

The inhabitants of Vasilika, as the village will henceforth be called, are farmers and shepherds. The farmers cultivate the land in the plains adjacent to the low-lying ridge on which most of the houses are built. As a consequence of the dowry and inheritance system in the region, some of the fields near Vasilika are owned by farm families in neighboring villages, and the Vasilika farmers own some lands in other sections of the Boeotian plain and even in the surrounding foothills. By and large, however, the inhabitants cultivate lands of the quality characteristic of the Boeotian plains. These lie in East Central Greece, north and west of the smaller plains of Attica. The flat land of Boeotia is one of Greece's few regions of moist, fertile soil. The Kiphisus river once flowed through the whole area, but earth movements and the porous limestone of the region, which permits underground drainage, have broken the continuity of the river's flow. The upper stream flows through a narrow mountain-bordered valley and then into a wide plain which was once covered by Lake Copais. The river is silt-laden, and the underground channels through which the water escapes tend to get blocked up. The land can not always absorb the waters of the winter rainy season as rapidly as they accumulate. Thus an especially wet winter can flood the fields so badly that they do not drain off in time for spring planting (Newbigin 1949:333). A system of controlling the waters exists for the land reclaimed by draining Lake Copais. However, the cultivated fields of Vasilika lie some miles past this region, and although the Kiphisus flows through their fields, the farmers have no method of draining off excess water. Consequently, they watch the winter rains with some apprehension. On the other hand, the regular winter flooding in ordinary years, along with the accumulation of alluvium enriched by humus, makes the soil suitable for two crops of wheat annually and for summer crops such as cotton and tobacco (Newbigin 1949:333).

Since the growing season for these last two crops is a dry one, the cotton always requires irrigation and the tobacco sometimes does. The natural underground drainage system makes it possible to drill good wells almost anywhere in the fields, from which water may be drawn by diesel irrigation pumps. Many such wells have been dug and are serving Vasilika's farmers. Within the village itself there are nine wells in regular use. Only an unusually dry year brings any danger of serious water shortage for either ordinary household purposes or for irrigation. The mulberry trees which line the main village street and the occasional trees which appear here and there among the houses flourish because of the good water table and, in spring and summer, provide a pleasing contrast of dark green to the predominantly brown and orange tones of the village's land and houses.

The people of Vasilika, like those on the other plains of Greece, not only have the advantage of larger tracts of more fertile soil but also are considerably less isolated than the inhabitants of the mountain villages. As will be seen,

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1969 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

the easy access to roads and transportation to and from the village has important consequences for its culture and social structure.

The Boeotian plain is bounded by mountain systems and the sea. Running west and north, the Parnis, Kithaeron, and Helicon ranges as well as Parnassos itself separate it from the plains of Attica. The town of Lamia on the small Sperchios plain to the north and the west can be reached only by traversing parts of the Kallidromon and Ghiona mountains. To the east, an extension of the Kallidromon range makes access to the Gulf of Atalanti difficult. But the most important road which runs over and around the mountains and through the plains from Athens to Thessalonika has been paved throughout its length since World War II. It is now a two-lane asphalt highway which serves as a truck and bus route of major importance in the communications system of the country. In most of Boeotia, the highway runs more or less parallel with and not far from the tracks of the Athens-to-Thessalonika railroad.

The village of Vasilika lies on the slope of a low ridge just a half mile off this main highway. Since the summer of 1956, a local bus comes through the main street of the village twice a day, at 6:00 in the morning and at noon.

Going in the direction of Athens, ninety miles distant, the bus passes a British Petroleum (BP) station and restaurant a mile and a half down the road and traverses several villages. Its destination, however, is usually Levadhia, fifteen miles from Vasilika. Levadhia is the provincial capital and marketing center of some 12,000 population. Here bus connections to Athens may be made.

In the opposite direction, the nearest village of some size and importance is Kifisokhori. It lies five miles up the road from Vasilika. Kifisokhori has, among other facilities not available in Vasilika, flour mills, large grocery stores, barbers, doctors, a pharmacy, a movie, and several taxis. Whether they use the bus or load their horses with flour for the mill and walk by way of the shortcut through the fields, the people of Vasilika go most frequently to Kifisokhori.

Further north and off to the west, but only about eight miles past Kifisokhori, is Amphiklia. This town is the seat for tax collections and other governmental financial matters for the fiscal district in which Vasilika is situated. On the 16th of each month, for example, the priests of the village within Amphiklia's jurisdiction gather in the town to collect government salaries. Amphiklia also has a coeducational gymnasium (the approximate equivalent of an American high school and junior college combined). Several boys and girls from Vasilika live in that town to attend the school.

The people of Vasilika can also travel in the direction of the sea. The dirt road which starts at the highway leads to the houses of the village, then becomes the main street, and finally extends beyond the settlement between the borders of the fields and the foot of the ridge on which the village is situated. Never free of ruts, of dust, and in the winter, of mud, the road narrows and deteriorates further as it passes the last village house. Nevertheless, pedestrians, donkeys, horses, tractors, and even, with some difficulty, trucks and buses can get through. Half a mile past the last village house, at the banks of the Kiphisus, this road meets the road to Atalanti. Buses from Levadhia that have turned off

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

4

The Family: Dowry and Inheritance; Formal Structure[1]

182 428 583 THE DOWRY AND INHERITANCE SYSTEM in Vasilika is primarily a mechanism by which property is transferred from one generation to the next. It is this kind of mechanism, but it is also more. By reason of the context of values in which they operate and because of their specific characteristics, dowry and inheritance patterns as they function in Vasilika have ramifications not only for the Boeotian countryside but also for Greece as a whole.

Inheritance by Sons

428 583 [671] [594] Both the Greek laws of inheritance and village custom require that property be divided equally among all the children, sons and daughters alike. Some receive their shares through inheritance or by gifts while the parents are still alive, but the daughters of a family are entitled to their share at marriage in the form of a dowry. Since, from the standpoint of the villagers, a man's most compelling obligation is to arrange for the successful marriage of his daughters, and since no girl in Vasilika can normally expect to marry without at least a token dowry, the girls have first lien on the family's property. For most of [423] Vasilika's families, land holdings are the most valuable assets, and dowries are, therefore, calculated ordinarily as a transfer of a share of the land from parents to a daughter and through her to the jurisdiction of her husband. However, if a family's land holdings are such that it is obvious that by giving daughters their

[1] Portions of this chapter were presented as a paper at a conference on Rural Peoples of the Mediterranean held at Burg Wartenstein in July 1959, and will appear in *Mediterranean Countrymen*, edited by Julian Pitt-Rivers, Mouton and Co., The Hague, scheduled for publication in 1962.

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

land directly supports boys who live in towns both during their years in school and until they find a job. The possible importance of this for the urban economy of Greece will be discussed again in connection with dower wealth that is transferred to the cities.

Dowering the Daughter

The dowry shall be discussed first as the social mechanism by which daughters inherit property at marriage, and second as a mechanism for social mobility. In Vasilika, parents are obligated to arrange marriages for their children, and with few exceptions they do so. They most frequently look for spouses outside of the village. They expect that a girl will leave the village to live with her husband and that a farming son will bring his wife to Vasilika to live with him (technically, patrilocal residence). In Vasilika, when the villagers speak of the engagement of a man or a woman, they say, "He (she) has become engaged in Mirali;" or in Sfaka, or in Athens, or in whatever village or town the prospective spouse comes from. They explain the prevalence of exogamy, to which the phrase just quoted gives linguistic expression, by saying that it is too difficult to find, inside Vasilika, anyone who is sufficiently distantly related to be eligible for marriage.

The custom of the village prohibits marriage between relatives on both the mother's and father's side to the degree of third cousin. In a village with a total population of 216, in which there are six sets of adult brothers and one group of three men whose fathers were brothers, there will certainly be limits to the number of boys and girls eligible to marry each other. The number of families connected by kin ties in the village is even larger, however, because in each generation there are some marriages that do take place among fellow villagers and this, of course, relates some of the village's children to each other through their mother's line, even if their fathers have no paternal relatives in Vasilika. Kinship connections are further extended within the village by the ceremonial kinship ties of godparenthood. On the ground that any godparental relationship between two individuals automatically places not only the individuals concerned but both their elementary families into close kin relations, the Greek Orthodox Church prohibits marriages between the two families to the same degree that would be necessary if they were consanguineal; that is, blood relatives.

When a daughter is to be married, the father of the girl is believed to have ultimate responsibility for giving the dowry. However, the brothers' interests are involved, the mother is deeply concerned about the future of her daughter, and certainly the girl herself wants to know something about her prospects. In the informal discussions that go on within the family, everyone participates and expresses his point of view. The father alone, however, has the formal responsibility for conducting the negotiations, which are always carried on with the aid of a *proksenitis* or *proksinitra* (marriage intermediary). In the Boeotian countryside, this person (either a man or a woman) is a friend or relative, either

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

583 wedding to take the *rukha* and the house furnishings she has received as gifts
[585] to the groom's home. The groom hires a truck to do the job, not because there is
[286] so much furniture, but because of the quantity of *rukha*. A Vasilika girl is expected to have woven at home approximately thirty sheets, six light blankets, two heavy woolen carpets, five lighter woolen floor coverings, five coarse woolen blankets, four mattress covers, ten carry-all bags or sacks, two heavy ornamental table covers, one red-and-white striped and one blue-and-white striped tablecloth with twelve napkins to match each of the cloths, six cotton face towels, and two long cotton towels for the tray in which loaves of bread are left to rise before baking. To this accumulation she will add several pieces that are bought from
[438] itinerant merchants and embroidered at home. Also purchased, usually in town,
are white sheets, pillow cases, and turkish towels as well as the material for
[352] about six pairs of curtains. Furniture consisting of a wooden wardrobe, a bed, a
[431] table, and some chairs may be added, as are the cooking and serving utensils given to the girl as gifts. The colorful collection fills a small pick-up truck, and
585 the sight of one of these on the road with laughing and singing young men crowding whatever space is left is a sure sign of a wedding. On Sunday morning the groom's party, including his marriage sponsor (*kumbaros*), arrive at the house of the bride. The *kumbaros* leads the group to the house, only to find the door closed and locked. He begs that the door be opened. The girls inside giggle and demand 1,000 drachmas to open the door. After some bargaining, the *kumbaros* gives a five-drachma piece and the party comes in. It is the
[608] *kumbaros* who rents the bride's white wedding gown, provides the wedding
[262] crowns, the large white candles which are held at the ceremony, and the *kufeta*, the sugar covered almonds arranged in small packages of white netting, tied with a white ribbon, which he distributes to each of the guests after the ceremony.
[574] After the wedding feast, for which musicians are hired so that the guests can
[534] sing and dance, the bride is accompanied to the groom's home by her brothers
[152] and sometimes a sister. The women, including the bride, all cry as they leave
[178] the girl with her new husband.[1] But even among farmers these customs are changing, and in recent years the bride and groom have taken to leaving the wedding guests to go off on a short honeymoon.

Disposition of Dower Property

425 After the marriage of a farmer, the couple is settled in the man's village,
583 usually in the home of his parents. The groom has acquired some parcels of
182 land in his wife's village and a small hoard of cash as well. For the first few years of his marriage, he may go to his wife's village to work the land himself,
[591] or he may contract with his father-in-law or with one of his brothers-in-law to
[427] work it for him on shares. Either way he will have occasion to visit his wife's village and to have some association with her father and brothers. In the meantime,
[574] he is likely to be looking for an opportunity to exchange land with a farmer who

[1] The description of the engagement and wedding ceremonies is not complete. The details selected are meant to give only an impression of the nature of these affairs.

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)/%3 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

lives in his wife's village and has married a girl from his own settlement and, therefore, has land near the groom's village. A farmer husband may even be willing to consider the sale of the land in his wife's village to make a good purchase nearer home. Neither of these possibilities may come to fruition for years, so that they may remain subjects for long-term discussion between a man and his father- and brothers-in-law. To summarize the situation, land given as one part of the dowry and village exogamy have the consequence of stimulating land exchanges and sales in the Boeotian countryside, of stimulating the visits of men among the villages in the region with a consequent exchange of views and ideas, and of providing an economic focus for maintaining some kind of relationships between affinal relatives, that is relatives by marriage. The system of transferring land as dowry has the effect also of permitting a man to utilize his wife's property throughout his married life instead of having to wait to do so until after his wife's father's death.

The actions of the villagers and the tone in which they discuss these questions suggest that although there is some sentiment attached to the land inherited from a father and to the land that were parts of a mother's dowry, the symbolic value of particular parcels of land as a link between generations does not usually take precedence over the economic value of the land as an income and food producer.

We have still to consider the question of the ultimate disposition of dower properties in marriages between farmers. The Greek Civil Code states that dower property must be accounted for separately from that owned or eventually inherited by the husband, and as we have seen, stipulates that the consent of the wife is required before dower property can be sold or exchanged. If there is a divorce, the wife is entitled to the return of the dower property or of its equivalent. In the house of the groom's father, the newly married couple is given a room in which they and, later, their children sleep. Here the bride's trousseau gives the room a personal touch. Both the young people work on the farm holdings of the groom's father along with his father, mother, and brothers, and unmarried sisters. They also work on the young wife's dower lands. The income from these may be pooled with that from the paternal holdings but need not be. The young husband's father has jurisdiction over the ordinary living expenses of the entire household and distributes the cash needed for purchases of clothing, food, and household equipment. During the lifetime of his father, the cash portion of the dowry may be invested by the son in additional land or in some other capital equipment such as a diesel pump. Under no circumstances do the villagers consider it proper to sell dower lands or to use dower funds for ordinary living expenses. Only the need for money for a very serious illness or for some other emergency is felt to justify such action. In whatever form, the dowry is considered capital which may be invested or saved to add to the estate available for the newly married couple's children.

After the death of the husband's father, the young man continues to live with his brothers, most of whom are likely to be married by now, until they decide to separate and divide the patrimony. This now consists of the property their father inherited from his father's patrimony, the dower property of their

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

596 ing composition of the households is a deceptive base for understanding the
594 principles of organization of households in the village. The existent situation is
178 one in which elementary family households predominate, but the mental construct which influences the formation of new households does not seem to have changed from the old expectation that several married farming brothers will live together. It remains as a latent principle, available for implementation whenever the circumstances warrant it.

Consequences of the Dowry System

428 The discussion of the dowry as a mechanism of inheritance for children
583 of farmers who remain farmers may now be summarized. The dowry is part of
182 a system in which children receive property through the parents of both their fathers and their mothers. Property from two sources merges in each generation
[594] and is redistributed in the next generation. Although patrilineally inherited lands (those passed from a father to his sons in each generation) have some continuity in space and have some continuity of ownership in the male line, such lands always constitute only one part of the total holdings of any particular elementary family. Therefore, in Vasilika and its vicinity, the pattern of land and money circulation through inheritance has two facets: one portion that is patrilineally inherited straight down the line of males; a second, distributed at marriage, that eventually circulates among unrelated elementary families. The system
[421] cannot be described as one in which women inherit from women, in spite of the legal residual control of a woman over her dower properties, because brothers have equal rights with their sisters to their mother's dower lands. In Vasilika, at least, there is neither an explicit nor an implicit pattern of giving daughters only dower property and sons only patrilineally inherited lands.

602 The combination of practices including the function of the dowry as
428 inheritance, land as a major form of property, and village exogamy have some
425 further consequences for the relation of property to groups of kinsmen in the Boeotian countryside. In spite of patrilocal residence and some patrilineally in-
[613] herited land, the descendants of a male line are not associated with any particular landed estates. Since no man owns or farms exactly the same holdings as his father farmed before him, nor the same holdings his brothers have, and since he himself will expect to work different lands in different communities even in the course of his own adult life, the permanent association of certain estates with
[583] certain lineages is obstructed (Friedl 1959b). Moreover, since dowries move
[582] down the generations and not across to a man of one's own generation who might use the property to marry off one of his daughters, there is no economic
[671] advantage to brother-and-sister exchange marriages. This situation is congruent
[795] with both the Greek Orthodox Church's and the Civil Code's (Section 1357) prohibitions on marriages between sisters and brothers-in-law and between
[611] cousins to the third degree. This rule, as well as the bilateral reckoning of kin in Greece (Section 1356), prevents the transfer of property at marriage from resulting in either a series of equal exchanges between two sets of kin groups

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or in a regular pattern of circulation through several generations among particular sets of such groups. The control of property establishes social links between a man and his wife's relatives not only in the ways we have mentioned, but because his wife's parents and brothers and sisters have a legal and customary right to be consulted before the final alienation of dower property (Section 1418). These links last only one generation, however, so that in each generation a new network of relations between elementary families in the neighborhood develops, clustering around the management of dower properties. These matters are important because they reveal some of the economic and social structure of Vasilika and its neighborhood that is congruent with the type of relationships people, both kin and non-kin, have with each other (see Chapter 5).

One other situation occurs frequently enough in Vasilika to be worth mentioning. When a farmer has no sons to inherit his land and his house, but has a daughter, the father may acquire a man's assistance on the farm by importing a son-in-law. Such a man is called a *soghambros* in Vasilika; he is a husband who moves into his wife's household instead of vice-versa. The importation of a *soghambros* is also a solution to the problem of a young widow who has no grown sons to run the farm left by her husband and arranges a second marriage for herself with a man who is willing to work her first husband's holdings and her original dower lands. Since a *soghambros* is always a manager of, and the laborer on, property belonging to others and is expected to bring no property of his own with him, there is a slight social stigma attached to the status of Vasilika. The villagers say also that a *soghambros* is not "master in his own house." Certainly, the lot of a man who is not a master in his own house and comes as a stranger to a village where most of the other men have known each other all their lives is not a happy one. But a *soghambros* is not really dishonored by his position; the villagers, in this situation, as in so many others, recognize the practical necessities which brought about the arrangement and do not strongly condemn a man for making the best of his difficulties.

The dowry in Vasilika enters into the life of the villagers in other ways besides inheritance at marriage. It has long served as a means of upward social mobility for girls. Since, as we have seen, the marriage of a daughter is among the most important obligations of parents, the dowry comes into the consciousness of the villagers more often as a property requirement for marrying off their daughters than as a means of transmitting inheritance. When, in addition, the high value placed on upward social mobility is translated into an effort to find urban sons-in-law for one's daughters, the dowry emerges as a mechanism for increasing the social prestige of the family. Farmers are willing to give larger dowries in exchange for the great satisfaction they derive from having town sons-in-law. In Vasilika, the education of some sons has released land to add to the girls' dowries. Improved agricultural income has also enabled the farmers to give larger dowries. In the decade ending in 1959, every marriage of a Vasilika daughter whose father was in the upper half of the village's income range had been one with a man of respectable occupation who lived in a provincial town or in Athens. The husbands are tailors, small retail store-owners, or civil service workers. One young man is a photographer, another is a gymnasium

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professor who has become the principal of his gymnasium. In 1961, however, the son of a rather prosperous village farmer became attracted to a daughter of another Vasilika farmer with good land holdings. The young man asked his father to arrange the marriage for him, and, since all the conditions were entirely suitable, the young couple were engaged.

The trend in favor of town husbands prevails, however, among most of those who can afford it. Once a few girls had married urban men, the rivalry between village families led to greater efforts to secure town husbands for the others. Consequently, there has been an inflation in dowries which is alarming the villagers themselves. In the early 1950's, a *prika* worth $3,000 was enough for a town husband of no special prestige; by the late 1950's, the same kind of man was asking for one worth $4,500.

The inflation has had several consequences. Often the value of the dowry can no longer be limited to the share of the inheritance to which a girl is entitled. Farming sons are willing to give up some portion of their shares so that their sisters can "live well," as they put it. The brothers gain also from the added prestige and influence of the family. These in turn may make it possible for them to find a girl with a larger dowry than their property qualifications might warrant. A farmer so situated may make higher demands on the ground that his and his wife's children will have an urban aunt and uncle. The town sister might provide board for her nephews and nieces (girls are increasingly being sent to gymnasium) while they are in school and can also be expected to help them find jobs.

Another consequence of the dowry inflation is the increasingly late age of marriage for the village girls and the town men. It takes farmers longer to accumulate the larger amounts of cash for the dowry, and the prospective grooms longer to attain a position or income at least partially commensurate. Vasilika's girls who marry town men are usually between twenty-five and thirty. Those whose fathers have few land holdings, and consequently can offer only small dowries, have been marrying farmers from other villages or within Vasilika itself and have been in their early twenties at the time of the engagement.

Now let us consider the disposition of the dowry which goes with a girl marrying a town husband. First, if he accepts land as part of the dowry, he will of necessity have it worked by his wife's male relatives. In time, however, often by the end of the first decade of the marriage, the son-in-law may wish to expand his shop, or may wish to start building a house for himself or for his daughter's dowry, or may hear of a good investment opportunity. He will want money for these purposes, and so he begins, with his wife's consent and after consultation with her father, to arrange for the sale of dowry lands. Since the 1950's, prospective town grooms have been less willing to take land which they know they will eventually want to sell, and have been asking for cash or for a house in town. Anticipating this situation, several of Vasilika's farmers who have small daughters have begun to use their savings and even to sell a little land in order to build houses in Athens or in a provincial town so that by the time their daughters are ready to marry, the houses will provide the main portion of the dowry.

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management, they recognized the work of their women as contributing labor value, but in the context of the dowry, they did not see the situation this way.

The villagers act and talk as if they felt that it is the obligation of men to care for women, and that the obligation is largely fulfilled by the provision of a dowry for a daughter. The provision of the dowry is thus, in a sense, an outward manifestation of masculinity. By village custom, when a father dies or is incapacitated, a girl's brothers are considered responsible for marrying her off, and they are usually expected to fulfill this obligation before they themselves marry. This point of view does not correspond with the legal requirements. In the Civil Code (Section 1496) the mother is responsible for furnishing dowries for her daughters in the event of her husband's death or incapacity. The village attitude, however, I believe, is based partly on the feeling that most women are not capable of managing their estates and on the congruent custom of appointing male guardians to manage for them until their sons are grown, but more importantly on the basic notion that the provision of dowries is a male prerogative.

The emotional overtones accompanying the dowry system may be understood as a possible shift of emphasis from one kind of expression of male honor to another. Anthropologists who have worked in Greek Cypriot villages and in shepherd communities[4] report that the males in these settlements, almost all equally poor, based their sense of manly prestige not on wealth, but on the degree of honor they achieved by the protection of the chastity of their women. It would seem as if, in Boeotia, male honor depends not only on male protection of the chastity of women but also more explicitly and obviously on the provision by the men of adequate dowries for their women. The sense of satisfaction a man gets from dowering a daughter becomes more intense and compelling because the action is also an expression of his masculinity.

The shift of emphasis can be demonstrated in the village. Among the shepherds and landless or land-poor families in the village, girls marry earlier, with small dowries and trousseaus, and acquire correspondingly less prosperous husbands. The fathers and brothers involved, and the other villagers, comment on these unions by saying that early marriages are essential because otherwise the girls might run wild and disgrace the family. In other words, then, when economic means are limited, men can maintain their honor and self-respect only by protecting their women, and this becomes the paramount concern. The villagers seem to recognize that when there is no hope for even the modest degree of economic security and material well-being that the dowries of Vasilika's landowning farmers can provide, there is less impetus for the girl herself to remain virtuous or for her prospective suitors to respect her situation without the added emphasis on physical retaliation by her menfolk. However, flamboyant behavior and clandestine affairs could destroy the hope of a decent marriage for a girl whose father can provide a reasonable dowry. Or such actions might require an exorbitant dowry to overcome the effects of her bad reputation. For these girls, the rewards of waiting are great enough for them to be willing to postpone both

[4] John Peristiany and John Campbell, respectively.

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583 marriage and affairs, so that there is less danger that they will allow themselves
593 to be compromised and less need to claim male protection.

Yet, with all the difficulties and sacrifices required by the dowry and
[182] arranged marriage system in Vasilika, there have been very few young people
[836] who have "gone to the mountains," as the villagers phrase elopements of
[577] couples who have fallen in love. One or two such affairs seem to occur in each generation, at a time when the girl's male relatives are dead or not in the village; and among young people each of whose families have relatively few economic
[558] resources. The subsequent standard of living of the couples has been among the lowest in the village, and the men never fully recover from the stigma of such senseless behavior, from the villagers' view. Observable examples reinforce the villagers' argument that there is no hope for a decent life without a dowry, and reinforce their admonitions to their sons to wait for properly arranged marriages and not to be *trelos* (crazy) and run off to the mountains with a girl. The admonition gains force from the further observation that if the eloping young couples have little, their children will have still less. Any man who accepts a girl without a dowry is thought to be cheating his children of their rightful inheritance from their mother.

[183] Yet, as we have had occasion to remark in other connections, the structure of marriage arrangements in Vasilika is not quite as rigid and as precise as the foregoing generalized description might imply. One Vasilika brother, in speaking of a sister who had become his responsibility after their father's death, remarked "Glory be to God (and he crossed himself) she met a man who liked her and was willing to take her with nothing but the *rukha* and what we had
[533] in the house." The unexpected can happen in Vasilika, and infant girls are still dandled with songs about how their beauty will some day attract a husband without a dowry.

Family and Kin Structure

59
583 The foregoing discussion of family activities and of the forms of
182 property inheritance and circulation has by implication involved questions of family structure. By giving a newly married couple property of its own to manage, the dowry serves as a mechanism to separate the newly married couple structurally from either of their two sets of parents. This is true even when the farmers bring their brides back to their fathers' households. Such patrilocal residence produces the temporary situation of a functioning, cooperative, extended, patrilineal kin group, but one that is continually aware of its distinct component elementary families. We have said temporary because there is no contemplation that the several elementary family groups concerned will live out their lives in a joint, cooperative household.

601 The kinship terminology used in the village is congruent with the struc-
171 ture underlying the realities and expectations of the situation just described. Greek terms of reference for mother, father, grandfather, grandchildren, cousin,

/34 cont./
wishers. People are formed into groups and visit every house where the table is set in the center of the main room with different drinks, colored eggs and good food. The groups crack /p. 85 skipped in original numbering/ /36/ an egg and wish the hostess saying, "Christ is risen", and the house owner answers, "Truly he is risen".

Children run through the streets dressed in their new clothes and carry colored eggs and candies. These are the days when the houses are open to every one. The recreation that these three days offer to these people is far greater than all the rest of the holidays of the year. For the Orthodox church the birth of Christ does not have so much importance as the resurrection of Christ which shows the Athanasia of the spirit.

At this time of the year everything takes life in nature, too. The almond trees, the cherry trees, the pear trees are in blossom. The fields are green and nature takes the appearance of living again. All these combined leave an unresistable influence upon every person. Through such recreation which is a part of their religion, the people forgive each other and old hatreds give way to renewed friendship and forgiveness. It is surprising to note how much influence these holidays have in the lives of the people that live together. The spirit of hospitality, the spirit of giving to those that do not have, the spirit of taking active part in village movements and the blind obedience to the orders of the higher rank, are a result of these traditionally influenced holidays that are represented by different Saints. Recreation is thus closely associated with the /37/religious holidays.

Play of Children. Whether at school or outside of school the children do not have organized recreation. At the school the weekly exercises which are more or less military are given by the teacher. The children have two recess periods of ten minutes each from 8-12. At these periods they devise their own play. At home the child has no time for play. He or she will graze the oxen or weed the garden and fields, sweep the yard and help in housework. While very young the children are taught to work and

/77 cont./ 353 778 776 [354] [553]

makes his prayer every evening and morning, occupies the eastern corner of the house. The ikon of the Saint is well decorated with the best handwork. In front of the ikon hangs an oil lantern that burns day and night. The Saint guards the family, the animals, and blesses the crops. Usually members of the family bear the name of the Saint.

Once a month the priest visits the home of every farmer and brings the blessing of the coming month by sprinkling holy water in all the corners of the house. He passes in front of the ikon and utters a prayer in the name of the Saint for the safeguard, prosperity, and health of the family. [793] [788] [782]

Religion for these people is a necessity of life. Without it they cannot live. In every phase of /78/ their lives religion plays an important part as in recreation, farming, traveling or even in fighting they have their respective Saint through whom they communicate with God. 771 776 182

When Paul entered the temple of the unknown God and preached the known God to the Greeks, he must have forgotten to mention to them the form of worship they should adopt. The Greeks have accepted the theory of Christianity of one God but have dressed up this new religion with their old forms of worship. They have changed the names of ancient gods and given them new names with the same duty as the old ones. Thus Saint Nicholas replaced the god of the sea, Poseidon. 788 776

Since 1453, which marks the fall of Constantinople to the Turks and the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the Christian people of the Near East have gone through the severest test in Christian history. The continuous persecution, massacres, deportations, and all kinds of inhuman methods could not desecrate it. In fact the Christian faith got stronger and stronger and had become a bond of uniting the Christians. The same strong ties in this religion strengthened them to overthrow the bonds of slavery, after 400 years. It /79/ was religion that kept the Greek letters, the language of the people, and it was their strong belief in the power 175 795 [619]

so that fragments will not lodge in his throat. The pediatricians urge against this practice. They also urge rigid scheduling of feedings. The behaviourist principles of child rearing fit into the value of firmness, the feeding schedule falls in with the training of fortitude, and is introduced in the name of self-discipline, as well as for giving the mother freedom, that is leisure and freedom from encroachment. Few mothers, however, fall in with these schedules. 853

Toilet training is not mentioned in the two current manuals on child care. Mothers report that they begin training for urination at five or six months. Training for the bowel movement does not come until the child can sit by himself. Help in learning how to speak is suggested and described at length, but none for walking. Greek mothers do encourage their children to walk, however, and a folk rhyme says that a baby, "lest it be shamed," takes to the wall and walks at seven months. The manuals devote much space to character training; obedience is taught first, almost from birth; it is the parents' task to mould the character of the child, to be firm and unyielding. Mothers are urged not to be indulgent or overprotective. 863 856 [868] 867 [855]

The manuals devote about a third of their space to illness and home care. Under illness are listed sleeplessness, enuresis, thumbsucking, night terror, lack of appetite. Enuresis is said to come from irritation of the urethra, thumbsucking to begin around the fifth month from irritation of the gums. 863 753

In recent years, mothers have been urged to spend more time with their babies and to do more things for them. Among the urban well-to-do this means that mothers are urged to bathe, feed, and suckle their babies themselves. For other groups, this would mean a displacement; the children are usually with the mother, working with her and sharing experience with her; but to give them her undivided attention she would have to change basic attitudes, the accepted place of the child within the family and his assumed share in all its functions; and she must reorient the entire system of roles within the family. 854 182 [369]

The mother apparently takes no delight in the naked baby, in touching its skin or watching its movements when freed from the swaddling cloth. Traditionally the baby, like the adult, is never naked. The baby's bath is not a special occasion of delight. In her lullabies, the mother shows no delight in any part of the child. She speaks of the joys of gardens, flowers, herbs and trees, but most of all, she tells of the rich clothes and adornments she is ordering from strange lands. She dreams of her daughter's wedding and her son's education. To the visitor, the baby consists of arms and legs; she says, first making appropriate allowances for the evil eye: "How his arms and legs have grown!" The mother coos and signs to her baby and smiles a special smile; she kisses his hands, she holds him in her arms. She calls him "My little gold, my little angel, my little bird, my little love"; she uses no terms derived from the sense of taste, unless she is a refugee 854 [291] [784]

really Greek, since they do not conform to the tradition of Greekness. 000

Religion permeates Greek life, punctuating it with ritual. No Greek, urban or rural, would think of initiating anything important without a religious inauguration. Schools open with the inaugurative *agiasmos*, "making holy"; the foundation stone of every house is laid with *agiasmos*; merchants begin new undertakings with the proper religious inauguration. On Epiphany, the sea is made holy for those who journey on it. In the country, blessed water is carried from the Epiphany Mass to sprinkle on the fields. The Virgin and the Saints are invoked, but not mainly as correctives; their main function is to endow an undertaking with good and success, it is not primarily to prevent or correct. When a loved man, husband, son, brother, father, beloved, goes away with the merchant marine, or in the sponge-fishery, a woman makes a vow to the appropriate saint, to be fulfilled on the safe return. The islands are studded with small chapels which were promised on such occasions. However, priests are called in, and Saints and the Virgin invoked, also, when difficulties arise. Vows are made for the recovery of a loved one; the priest is called when the family has had a run of misfortune, to "make holy" and exorcise the evil. Priests conduct a rain litany to break a drought.

Traditionally, Sunday services are attended regularly by women and children, perhaps less faithfully by the men. Ceremonials, however, draw the entire family. The ritual is not bolstered by strict limits of time or rules of silence. Mass starts in due course, a little early or a little late, not on the dot of an appointed time. Children run in and out between the aisles, and mothers whisper endearments to babies. A woman will break into a dirge during the Good Friday Mass of the Epitaph, mourning the death of Christ, or adressing herself in sympathy to the bereaved Virgin. The Mass before the midnight preceding Easter is tense with expectation; there is great release and spontaneous joy when Christ is announced to be risen, and the "Christ is risen!" with which all are greeted is a true, joyous message, full of the wonder and the reassurance of the renewed miracle; the candles lighted from the sacred light at this time are carried home with true concern for saving the flame from extinction.

Religion is so firmly entrenched and unquestioned that it can be taken with casualness and a lack of self-conscious effort. It is accepted and ever-present like the air. One talks about Masses and preparations for litanies, but not about religion. Religion is not a personal matter, nor is it a guide to conduct. People consult the priest, but in matters of human relations, or, at any rate, relations which are regarded as secular, not because they are assailed by doubts. Young men do not talk about the meaning of Christ in their lives, nor do young girls dream of entering a convent. On the other hand, the Saints and the Virgin often figure in speech: a man singing of his beloved likens her neck to an altar, her arms to church tapers, or he tells her that he worships her like the Virgin.